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With Jesus:

OR, LOVE'S COMPANIONSHIP.

What would you give to have Jesus with you — with you as He once was with people in the long ago? When reading about Him have you not felt that you were reading of an absent person — one whom you would see in the next life, but not here?

If you love a person very dearly you cannot bear to be away from him; you feel that by staying away you wrong the loved one as well as yourself. I do not see how Jesus could love me very much and willingly be absent from me. I do not feel satisfied when told that He sees me; I want to see Him.

Reading of Jesus in the Bible makes people hungry to have Him with them, until they get the idea that it is of no use to expect this. It seems foolish to think He cannot be with us, when we can be with one another; or that He does not care to do so, or thinks it is best for us that He should not. The more you consider any such reasons as these, the more foolish you will see them to be.

If Jesus were here in the body and you were promised an opportunity of meeting Him, say some day next week, you would hardly think of anything else until then; or if Jesus were to come where you were, you would leave whatever you might be doing, to follow Him anywhere. You would not even ask where He was going; you would hardly care as to that. You would forget about food or sleep, or

whether it was night or day. I am sure you would cling to Him in this way, if you felt as even the weakest Christian would feel.

Can you imagine how those who were with Jesus when He was here in the body must have loved Him? how being with Him must have made them feel? But why did He leave those who thus clung to Him, and towards whom He showed such tender love? When Jesus first spoke of going away, they were in deep sorrow; they did not understand His going. But in Jesus' acts, and what followed them, things were exactly the opposite of that which the disciples expected or were used to expecting.

Sometimes people speak of Jesus' going away so as to draw us heavenward or to accomplish some work in heaven for us,

but we are apt to misunderstand all that is meant by this.

Jesus said it was best He should go away, and He tried to tell them why. But if His going away was like other people's, nothing could make up for the loss. Could anything make up to you for the loss of your mother or some one equally dear? The person you love is always more to you than anything he can do for you. Your first desire, if you love another, is to have him with you. To be denied companionship, in the end causes your love to perish.

You may learn to love one you have never seen; but, when you have done so, you want that person with you — you can never be satisfied without this.

I think that Jesus came and went away for the purpose of bringing each one of

us into a life of real companionship with Him. I think He came to live with people for a time in their poor way so that He might bring them and us to live with Him in His perfect way.

As you read the Bible story aright you first associate with Jesus in much the same way His disciples did, and through doing so rightly you associate with Him in this new way. "Perhaps you say, "I know Jesus is with me in spirit." But that is not at all what I mean. Sometimes when a friend goes away he says, "I will still be with you in spirit." But that does not satisfy; you want the real presence of your friend with you.

We say, "God is with us," meaning that He sees everything we do. But God cannot be with you as a companion unless you are with Him as such. Through a

telescope a man watched his boy playing on a hill-side several miles away, and saw him do some things that grieved him, and others that gave him pleasure. In some such way we are apt to think of God as with us. But in reality this father was as far away from his boy as the boy was from him. That he could see his son from a distance did not alter that fact.

On the night before Jesus was crucified He talked with the disciples about His going away and spoke of coming again. You will find most of what He said in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of John. He said, "In a little while ye shall not see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father" (John 16: 16). Those were strange words. They puzzled the disciples. They said, "What is this that

He saith, A little while? We cannot understand what He means."

Jesus knew that they wanted to ask His meaning; so, without waiting for their question, He goes on to explain. He speaks of sorrow they will soon have because of His crucifixion. He says, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Then He adds, "This will be a joy that no one can take from you." Why? Because it will be lasting (vs. 20-22). He tells them that things will be quite different then. Now they are seeking help through prayer to the Father, but they understand prayer only poorly, and so receive little benefit from it.

Do you know that true prayer means talking with? The disciples did not real-

ize that even as they spoke they were praying to Jesus. But after He was gone they could realize that Jesus was God, one with the Father, equal with the Father, and that all which the Father had was His. And Jesus tells them that when they know all this and have Him with them in a new companionship, they will then ask of Him or talk with Him in such a way that their joy will be full.

In the fourteenth chapter of John, Jesus begins by telling them of His Father's house with many mansions. He says He is going to the Father to prepare mansions for them, and is coming again to receive them unto Himself. You may have thought about these mansions, but not of dwelling in them now. Yet why should you not do so?

How little we know of heaven! We are apt to wonder where it is located. Jesus spoke of His kingdom as "the kingdom of heaven" and "the kingdom of God." He spoke of it as here and as "within" us, but sometimes He spoke of it as above. The spirit-life may well be called the life above, or the life of heaven. But there is no up nor down, no above nor below, in God's great universe. You rise from earth as your heart rises. God is above all because He is love. As you love you rise; as you hate you descend.

Perhaps you want to get away from earth, for you dislike it. You want to be free from care and worry, and here you do not feel free from these. But earth can be heaven or hell as you choose to make it. If God can be in heaven, yet here, you can be in heaven while here.

I do not know much of what is beyond this life. The present is enough for me now. As I live in the future, I mar both the present and the future. As I use the present aright, it will continually grow to mean more to me. You may always have all of heaven that you can hold. I am sure they are making a mistake who live a visionary and unreal life. To-day alone is yours. Living in the future puts you out of accord with the life of to-day. It shows contempt for God's present gifts and opportunities, and is unfitting you to fully enjoy the present and the future.

But Jesus says, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself," or unto these mansions. Why this "if"? Because there is something for the disciples to do.

Will they do it? They are free to choose, even as all are.

Now I want you to think of God as a Father in a new way. A father lives with his children. If you truly take God as your Father, you will live with Him and He with you. And if He does this, He will make a mansion of your heart. There are many heart-mansions already. There should be one for each of us.

But Jesus adds, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," as though saying that they are to follow Him to the Father, if they would be with Him and the Father. So now they are perplexed about the way. He had just before said He would come to take them to these mansions; now He speaks of the "way," as though they were to follow. It is the "if" over again. Then Thomas says,

We do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way? to which Jesus replies: I am the way to the Father (v. 6). If you had known me, you would have known the Father also; "and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him" (v. 7).

How strange these words! The disciples are confused. In answer, Philip says, "Lord, show us the Father." Jesus replies, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The very words I speak are not my own, He continues. The Father living in me, He speaks them. I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.

Jesus is now talking of a wonderful and mysterious union. You must try to see

how perfect this is. All I do, Jesus says — even the very thinking of the thoughts — is His; "the Father within me, He doeth the works." It is not in expressing your thoughts that the "works" consist, but in thinking them out.

This, then, is such a union that Jesus is all of the Father. But this is a double, or mutual relation, for He says, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." That is, through Jesus, the Father is and does everything, and through the Father Jesus is and does everything.

Now I want to speak to you about the Trinity. As God is love, the Trinity must be a Trinity of Love. But why need God as Love be more than one person? Because it takes at least two to make love a possibility. As you love one who is above you, you rise. So as you

love God, you rise into His likeness. As you grow in love to Him you grow in love to others. But the Infinite One, to be infinite in love, must love what is infinite. And God, as infinite in love, must have at least one like Himself to love. We must think of God as without beginning, so if He had no object of love except something of His own creation, there would have been a time when He was not Love. That which is like Himself must be God too. So God must be at least two persons in order to be, and ever continue to be, Infinite Love.

Now as love between persons is perfect, each becomes all that the other is. Of course you understand that this is a thought or heart-union. But there is another side to this union which you must keep in mind: Love is all action. The

amount of your active love measures the size of your personal heart.

Each life that loves is lost to itself to find itself. As one loves, he becomes truly a person, or a life. You are a personality only as your heart lives; and the heart lives only as it loves. Your heart-life is your personality. It is small or great according to the volume of love that is there. So you truly live only as you live in the life of another. Thus each person of the Trinity continues to be a separate personality.

Before this time Jesus had often told His disciples about the Father. Now He introduces to them the third Person of Love. He calls Him "another Comforter." He calls this Comforter the "Holy Ghost." The word "ghost" means spirit, and He is most often so

called. I want you to notice the word "Holy." I am sorry it does not convey the same meaning to us that I think it did to the disciples. A holy person is one who is set apart as sacred, precious or dear toward another. I am sure it was the sweetest and most loving word by which Jesus could introduce the Comforter to them.

Jesus had spent His life in comforting people. He now tells them that another like Him is to come. But notice that Jesus had a few minutes before said He would come to take them to the Father's mansions. Here He says that another is to come to take them there. So the disciples, still confused, ask for further information as to how they are to be with Jesus in these mansions.

It was then that Jesus gave them the

secret of His new way of being with them and of their seeing Him. He says that if any man will do thus and so, both He and the Father will come and make their abode with him.

But in doing so He takes another way of telling them about it. Before, Jesus had said He was coming to take them to the Father; next, they were to follow Jesus to the Father; and now, if they do thus and so, He and the Father will come and take up their abode with them. Right here I must tell you that the word "abode" which He now uses (v. 23) is the same word as is translated "mansion" in v. 2. So Jesus is now saying, "We will make our mansion with you," or make of your heart our mansion.

From all this you will see plainly that if the new Comforter is with the disciples,

Jesus and the Father are to be with them. To have one is always to have all. The Trinity, as Love, could never be separated. Perfect Love is perfect union. In and with Jesus in the body was each and all of the Trinity, though they but dimly understood this. The Holy Spirit is often called the "Spirit of Jesus," and the "Spirit of God." He is also called the "Spirit of Love," and Jesus had just said that the new Comforter was with them now.

The new Comforter is to be different from Jesus only in the way in which they will see Him and talk with Him. Jesus in visible form is to depart. He promises to return in a new form. It is proper that in the new form He should have a new name, so as to avoid confusion. Before He departs, He is the Spirit living in

a body. When He returns He will be the Spirit without a body. Please notice the words, "If any man will," etc. (v. 23). If Jesus had said, "If one of you will do so and so," then we might doubt whether He meant this for everybody.

Now I want to talk to you about companionship. Think for a moment how imperfect is our companionship with one another. We do not really understand another person perfectly or make another understand us. You use the senses of hearing, sight and feeling, that you may know or understand something of another. Through these is conveyed to you a little of what is in another's heart — but only a little. A living hypocrite or a piece of lifeless marble might smile upon you a heartless smile, but you would not care for either. A body full of heart,

or life, you care for. If the spirit is gone, or the person becomes heartless, you turn away from what is left. It is the heart for which you care.

Through the veil of another's body you seek to see the heart. You try to convey your own heart's thoughts and feelings to another by means of imperfect words and looks. Our bodies are in the way of our knowing and being known to others. Of course you want to be with one whom you love. To have one's bodily presence, even in this imperfect manner, is much better than absence; but if we could be with one another truly, without our bodies being in the way — that is, hiding the real self — we would certainly be far nearer. Heart-nearness is the nearness we all want. The heart is the real person. You feel happy in this companion-

ship, though that which you love is really hidden from you. This is because you know of nothing better. But why should there not be?

I used to think that Jesus had gone back to a realm of bliss, leaving me here in loneliness, privation and sorrow, to wait until the end of life. I am now sure that Jesus' going away was to bring to me a closer union. It was to bring heaven to us, or you may say to take us with Him to heaven. Paul speaks of being seated in heavenly places with Jesus.

In the prayer which followed, Jesus asked the Father that the disciples might be with Him beholding His glory (John 17: 24). This was not asking that they might leave the world — or be absent from the body — for He said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the

world" (v. 15). Yet love for Jesus separates — it takes your real life out of the world.

To draw you to Him, Jesus needed to come and make known His love. Then, as He is with the Father, so as you love Him, or act by this love, you are with Him and the Father.

The disciples did not really know Jesus until they had ceased to know Him in the body. It was not until His real self (absent from the body) was with them, that they could truly know Him. They had embraced His body before, because they longed to bring His heart in contact with their hearts. Before, they thought they had touched Him, but they touched only what was material; now heart touched heart. Before, it was the touch of a fleeting moment; now it was to be

one life-long embrace. It was as Jesus had said it would be — "joy complete," and a joy no man could take from them (John 16: 22).

Before, they thought they had heard Him speak when by means of imperfect words He tried to convey to their hearts His own heart (the Father's heart). But how little they had really heard so as to understand! Much of what He said had been meaningless. You do not care to hear what one says to you in an unknown tongue. They now realized what He had told them — that in this day He would speak to them plainly; "no more in proverbs," — or speech hard to be understood (v. 25).

As Jesus' ever dying was His ever living, so His going away meant coming to them truly and fully. His being

with the Father was His being with them. The disciples never realized their union with Him until after their sorrow over His death and their joy over His resurrection into new companionship with them.

I wish you could see how Jesus opens, or wishes to open, to you and me the spirit-world. Perhaps you have looked beyond this life for the heaven-life. Like Martha, who thought she must wait until the resurrection day to meet Lazarus, you need to hear Jesus say, "I am the resurrection; from me there need be no separation," and there will not be if you choose to have it so.

But after Jesus was crucified, He came back in the body again and again. I think these appearances, and what He said and did in connection with them,

were to better prepare the disciples for the change from the imperfect to the perfect companionship of which He had told them. At times He would appear. Then His form would fade away. Thus He led them to open their inner eyes to Him.

At last came the time when He thought it safe to remove His body entirely from their sight, so that they might have the promised constant and perfect vision of Him. Out of the city He leads them, and on the little hill of Olivet, as He still blesses them, He is parted from them and a cloud receives Him from their sight. But before this He has told them to remain in Jerusalem and wait for His new and perfect coming.

As they stand gazing upward at the cloud which has received Him, two

strangers in white robes suddenly appear, who give assurance of His promised return. And now Luke tells us they went back to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God (Luke 24: 53). How impossible this would have been if they were now without Jesus! I can only believe that the beginning of His going away was the beginning of His coming to them more truly. We do not read of their ever being so happy as now, and it must have been this that gave them constant happiness.

You need not think that Jesus staid away and then came back suddenly, but rather that He kept coming more and more perfectly. As you see a friend approaching, your joy begins. Perhaps you hasten to meet him. But the climax

of joy comes with the meeting. Each day must have made the new way of seeing Jesus clearer, more real, more easy, and more natural. As thus love grew, the world about them and within them changed. The Father's mansions began to glitter to the eye of love. Music of heaven began to fall upon the heart's ears, while with them and within them more and more truly they saw Him whom they loved.

At last came the climax; the day when the Spirit-Jesus (the Precious Spirit, the Comforter,) became to them all that He had before promised. Perhaps it was for this they had prayed while yet full of joy. As you begin to know Jesus ever so little in this new way, you are full of joy, for you see what is before you and you seek for it. I will not say much about the

day of Pentecost, which was the time when this climax came.

I wish there were time to speak of the sweet, attractive and helpful words which His new and perfect coming enabled them to speak; how they could now tell so lovingly of Jesus that thousands at once became His disciples. Notice that they preached to the people about Jesus, but when they spoke of Him as with them now, they added the word "Spirit." To have done otherwise would have been to confuse their hearers.

If you would understand how much this new companionship with Jesus meant, read how those who entered it felt and acted. We are told that they were "all of one heart and soul" — that is, one in heart and soul with Jesus. Besides, love complete for Him gave them a

love complete for each one who loved Him thus, for we are told, "Neither said any man that aught of the things which he possessed was his own."

What was the secret of this new companionship? Jesus said it was as follows: "If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode (or mansion) with him." Why would the Father and Jesus be with all who keep Jesus' words? And just what did Jesus mean by His "words"?

He could not have meant His spoken words alone. These amounted to comparatively little, for they were poorly understood. His life was His real words. In everything He had sought to teach His disciples to be as He was, and they were to continue to be so. They would know

Him far more truly in this new companionship, and could be more nearly like Him.

A life of seeing the real Jesus was necessary in order to live like Him. Jesus said that the world could not receive His Spirit because it could not see Him (John 14: 17).

In all hearts He lived, and lives, seeking to win each to a life of seeing Him; but only as one loves Him can he enter this life.

Do not, I beg you, say, "This life is not for me," because only a few seem to have found it. A babe can love as truly as a grown person, and is even more likely to do so. Once Jesus said something about God's revealing to babes things which were hidden from the wise.

What I am here trying to teach you is

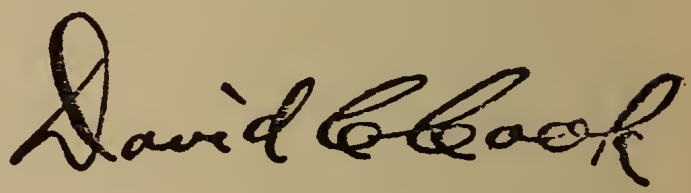
in accordance with what Jesus taught elsewhere. Read carefully the tenth chapter of John — "I am the Good Shepherd," etc. A shepherd is a person who is with and takes care of sheep; that is what the very name means. Jesus here emphasized His being with the disciples and they with Him. Then read the fifteenth chapter of John — "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," etc. This is a living union, and surely the closest one of which we can conceive.

This new companionship is the same kind that Jesus has with the Father and the Father with Jesus. Is not this close enough? Jesus prayed that the disciples might be one with Him, even as He and the Father were one. You desire just this companionship. I know that noth-

ing else can ever satisfy your heart's longings.

May you truly find it.

Lovingly yours,



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